

7. **Minor Prophets**

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Over the last three weeks we have read through and studied the three Major Prophets of Judaism, who's prophetic careers approximately correspond to the upheavals in the Kingdom of Judah: (First) Isaiah (second half of 8th Century B.C.E.); Jeremiah (late 7th – early 6th Centuries B.C.E.); and Ezekiel (early 6th Century B.C.E.) [with Second & Third Isaiah towards the end of the Exile and return under Persian rule in the mid to late 6th Century B.C.E.]. This week we will be reading and studying a selection of the Minor Prophets whose careers and divine messages extend over this entire period. And now that you are sufficiently familiarized with the Cultural and Historical backgrounds of the Prophetic Period, and some of the specific generic characteristics of Prophetic Writing, it will be your turn to teach the class as we divide up these Minor Prophets for each of you to present on during our next class.

Assignment #7 for Class on Saturday 13th October 2018

Reading

Please read the entire books of the following Minor Prophets: Habakkuk, Haggai, Malachi, Micah, Nahum, Obadiah and Zechariah. The books vary in length from just one chapter to fourteen chapters – but there are only 34 chapters in total to read (approximately half the length of Isaiah). Please read through the brief introductions to each book in your NRSV Bible, and use the annotations and notes as an aid to understanding and interpretation when you feel in need. Each of you will also be assigned one (or two) of these books for your class presentation, which will then be your central focus for this week's reading.

Thinking & Responding

The Goal of this week's Assignment is to produce and give a short (approximately 8-10 Minutes) Oral Presentation in class on one (or two) of the Minor Prophets, along with a Handout and a Bibliography. During the previous week's class you will be randomly choosing your text(s):

1. Micah
2. Nahum & Habakkuk
3. Obadiah & Haggai
4. Zechariah
5. Malachi

I would like you to focus on the Specific Historical Contexts of your assigned Minor Prophet. As you know by now, none of the prophetic texts are abstract - each one was produced by a specific person at a specific moment in time in response to particular

abuses in a particular society. You will need to do some research on the background, activity and reception of these prophets - you can use reference books in the SFM Library, introductory essays in your NRSV Bibles, or reputable online sources. Think about the following Questions which should be addressed in your Presentation:

- ❖ Who was this Particular Prophet?
- ❖ When were they Active?
- ❖ What was/were the Problem(s) they were Addressing?
- ❖ How did they Respond to those Challenges?
- ❖ What were some of their most Notable Pronouncements?
- ❖ Any Particular Controversial Issues in Understanding / Interpretation?
- ❖ Evaluate the Success of the Prophet

Hard Copy Resources

1. A good place to start is with the Introductory Essays and Annotations in your NRSV Bible, which will Help with Basic Explanation and Interpretation.
2. I will send each of you a PDF with relevant sections and introductions from Single-Volume Commentaries of the Whole Bible (Oxford, Harpers, New Jerome, etc.). It's a good place to start with some Basic Analysis / Interpretation.
3. I will also send you a PDF of the introductory essay on your assigned prophetic text from the superb, exhaustively detailed New Interpreter's Bible Commentary.
4. There are some Single Volume Commentaries on Specific Books of the Bible in the SFM Library (e.g. Anchor Bible Commentaries).

Online Sources

In addition to Hard Copy Sources in the SFM Library, there are Many Good Online Sources you can Use for Your Research. However, **BEWARE**: There are also many Bad Online Sources which are not Written by Scholars and Academics – Anyone with an Internet Connection can Publish their Thoughts about the Interpretation of the Bible, Regardless of their Expertise (or, more usually, Lack Thereof). You Must Ensure that you are Accessing and Using Reputable, Reliable, Scholarly / Academic Online Sources, which Aim to be Objective – you are trying to AVOID merely Subjective Opinions.

Examples of Reputable Online Sources:

- ❖ Oxford Biblical Studies Online
<http://www.oxfordbiblicalstudies.com/>
Username: bishops
Password: bishops
The Oxford site has a huge amount of scholarly Reference material online, including many different translations of the Bible, Annotations and Commentaries, Dictionaries and Encyclopedias, and access to many Articles and Reviews.

❖ The Bible Odyssey

<http://www.bibleodyssey.org/>

The Bible Odyssey is operated by the Society of Biblical Literature (SBL), the world's premier association of Biblical Scholars. The site includes tons of resources and tools, as well as the really nifty "Ask a Scholar" Feature where you can submit Questions online, and may get a Reply from a Top Bible Scholar.

❖ Google Scholar

<http://scholar.google.com/>

Google pre-sorts all Academic and Scholarly Sources from Journals and Periodicals and Academic sites in this Database.

WARNING: General Google Searches for Bible Passages will take you to Blogs, Personal Websites, Sermons, Church Newsletters, etc. These are **NOT** Academic / Scholarly Sources, and should NOT be Read or Consulted as part of your Research for your Presentation!!!

Please provide the following next week during class:

1. A single Printed Copy of your Written Presentation
2. A single Printed Copy of your Bibliography of Sources (try to consult a minimum of **three (3)** Sources, including the Essays and Annotations in the NRSV Bible)
3. Seven (7) Copies of a short one-page Handout for your classmates to accompany your presentation